



HIGHLIGHTS



FANOGCS “Pasko sa Nasyon” Celebration Shines in The Filipino American Journal

BY NAOMI DILIDILI

The FANOGCS “Pasko sa Nasyon” Celebration proudly made headlines in The Filipino American Journal, showcasing a vibrant celebration of culture, community, and holiday spirit. (See event story below)

On December 8, 2024, the Filipino American Nurses Association of Grand Canyon State (FANOGCS) brought the joy and warmth of a Filipino Christmas to life through its festive event, “Pasko sa Nasyon” (Christmas in the Village). Dressed in vibrant red and green, members and invited guests—ranging from allied medical professionals to supporters—gathered to celebrate the season in a heartwarming and spectacular way.

The event commenced with a red carpet experience and glamorous stage pictorials, where attendees showcased their brightest smiles and festive spirit to the skilled photographers. As the excitement grew, the program officially opened with a solemn yet inspiring moment: the USA and Philippine national anthems, beautifully led by Jennifer Webb and Christy Rigrish. This was followed by an invocation by Ed Orillo, setting a thoughtful tone for the celebration. (Continued in page 2)

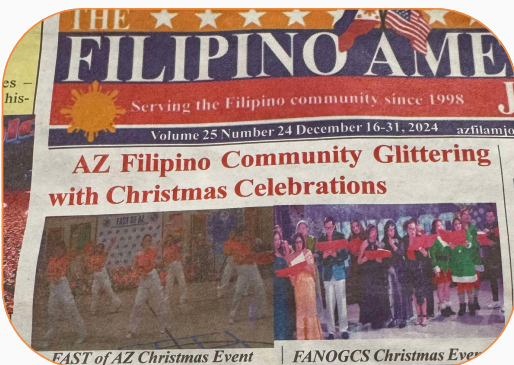
FANOGCS’ First Hiking Event: A Milestone for Health and Community

by: EDELMAN DEL MUNDO

On February 15, 2025, FANOGCS made history with its inaugural hiking event, “H4: Hike 4 Health, Hike 2 Help,” held at Telegraph Pass Trailhead in Desert Foothills, Phoenix. Spearheaded by the FANOGCS Public Policy Committee (Euly and Nanette), this event brought together 21 enthusiastic hikers—including several officers led by President Alain—who conquered the 2.3-mile out-and-back trail in just two hours.

More than just a hike, this event was a powerful statement of FANOGCS’ commitment to wellness, community, and service. It marked the beginning of a movement to inspire change, foster camaraderie, and encourage a healthier lifestyle—all while giving back to those in need.

As we look ahead, this is just the first step in an exciting journey. Thank you for your support, and we can’t wait to see you on the next hike!





Pasko sa nayon continued . . .

A Message of Unity and Excellence

FANOGCS President Alain Dela Cruz welcomed everyone with an engaging speech that reflected the heart of this year's theme. He shared how the combination of Italian and Filipino cuisine at the event symbolized the Filipino culture's adaptability, a quality that leads to excellence in all pursuits. Alain emphasized that Christmas is not only a religious celebration but also the ultimate "team-building exercise," bringing people together in love, joy, and peace.

"The spirit of excellence is like your favorite holiday cheerleader, shouting, 'Do it right, do it bright!'" Alain remarked, encouraging everyone to channel their talents and abilities in their daily lives, as FANOGCS does through its mission to promote and advance the nursing profession through leadership, education, community service, and global outreach.

A Night of Music, Dance, and Christmas Cheer

The festive atmosphere was brought to life with outstanding performances. Peggy Cuzzolina and Maricia Chen moved hearts with their soulful duet of "Give Love on Christmas Day." High-energy dance performances followed, with Team Cars electrifying the crowd and the Dancing Divas delivering a graceful, well-choreographed routine.

No Filipino Christmas would be complete without caroling, and the FANOGCS officers and members did not disappoint. Singing and dancing to "Feliz Navidad," they brought laughter and cheer to the audience. The surprise arrival of Santa Claus—bearing gifts for the children—added a magical touch to the evening, leaving everyone beaming with joy.

Raffle Prizes and Heartfelt Gratitude

Another highlight of the evening was the raffle, where attendees eagerly awaited their ticket numbers to be called. The generous contributions of officers, members, and supporters added excitement and anticipation to the celebration, making it a truly memorable experience for all.

As the evening drew to a close, President-Elect Janice Desiongco delivered heartfelt closing remarks, expressing gratitude to everyone who attended and supported the event. Her words summarized the highlights of the night and underscored FANOGCS' appreciation for the community's unwavering involvement. In a fitting finale, Janice opened the dance floor, and the crowd came alive, dancing the night away in true Filipino fashion.

A Celebration to Remember

The "Pasko sa Nayon" celebration was not just a Christmas party but a testament to FANOGCS' values of unity, service, and excellence. The successful event once again showcased the organization's commitment to bringing people together and uplifting the nursing community. FANOGCS extends its gratitude to all participants, performers, and supporters who made the evening a joyful and unforgettable celebration.

With love, laughter, and the spirit of giving in abundance, "Pasko sa Nayon" brought the heart of Filipino Christmas to life, leaving everyone looking forward to another year of excellence and togetherness.

THE GIVE MINISTRY PROJECT

Another FANOGCS Mission Accomplished – Supporting Jacob’s Hope

BY: BILLIE RAMOS SPARENGA



To kick off 2025 with compassion and purpose, several dedicated members of FANOGCS paid a heartfelt visit to Jacob’s Hope—one of our cherished charity recipients based in Mesa, AZ. During the visit, we were honored to present a donation check to support their incredible mission.

Jacob’s Hope is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that provides specialized, around-the-clock care for substance-exposed newborns—tiny lives born into the world already fighting. These precious babies, diagnosed with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS), receive

the nurturing, medical care, and love they so urgently need. In addition, Jacob’s Hope walks alongside expectant mothers battling addiction, offering hope, prenatal support, and a path toward healing and recovery. In the photo are members of FANOGCS alongside the inspiring Founder and CEO of Jacob’s Hope. Their team is deeply grateful for all forms of support—whether through financial donations or essential baby items for newborns up to 2 weeks old.

Want to make a difference?

Consider becoming a volunteer—whether as a baby cuddler or a program support volunteer. To learn more, call 480-398-7373 or drop off donations at:

1150 N. Country Club Dr., Bldg. 12, Mesa, AZ 85201

Together, we are planting seeds of hope, one life at a time.

FANOGCS Stands with MIHM (Mary’s Immaculate Heart Missionary): Fighting for Freedom, Healing, and Hope

BY: NAOMI DILIDILI



PHOTO CREDIT: MIHM

MIHM, one of FANOGCS’ chosen charities, is a fierce force for change in the Archdiocese of Cebu. These Women Religious rescue and

restore women and girls torn from the brutal worlds of prostitution, trafficking, addiction, violence, and abortion.

They don’t just offer shelter—they rebuild shattered lives, educate the forgotten, and empower survivors to rise. Their ministry of healing and deliverance reaches out to sick and the poor, bringing comfort, compassion, and hope to those society often forgets.

FANOGCS is proud to stand with MIHM—where healing begins, hope rises, and the chains of the past are broken for good. Together, we stand for restoration. Together, we choose hope.

THE GIVE MINISTRY PROJECT

FANOGCS Powers ABC Foundation's Scholars' Assembly

BY: SHALIMAR SALAS



On March 12, 2025, ABC Foundation rallied 232 scholars at PUP for a day packed with support, services, and community spirit. Big highlights: the launch of a brand-new Eye Clinic, free prescription glasses for 140 scholars, and free haircuts for 17 lucky students—all thanks to incredible partners like Paris Miki, Japan Eye Clinic, and CEU's Optometry Department.

Insight volunteers kept the energy high, running stipend distribution and a heartfelt listening circle where scholars opened up, connected, and lifted each other up.

Now 24 years strong, ABC Foundation remains laser-focused on helping scholars not just survive, but thrive—covering daily essentials so they can stay focused on their dreams.

The foundation gave their huge thanks to FANOGCS for making it all happen—funding services, supporting volunteers, and fueling a day that reminded everyone: community changes everything.

FANOGCS Extends Help to CharitAble MaKiMa

BY: NAOMI DILIDILI



Highlight's very own Merlyn Camat helped bridge hearts across borders by facilitating FANOGCS' support for CharitAble MaKiMa, just in time for this youth organization's fifth anniversary. Through her connection with longtime friend and fellow RN, Suzette Lubonting, this meaningful partnership came to life.

For five years, CharitAble MaKiMa has been a beacon of hope, tirelessly working to uplift lives and make a lasting difference in their community. In a heartfelt message on their official page, the organization extended their deep gratitude to FANOGCS for standing with them on this special milestone.

This celebration isn't just about looking back at what's been achieved—it's a bold promise to keep moving forward, to continue serving with compassion, and to keep planting seeds of hope for generations to come.

We proudly congratulate CharitAble MaKiMa on their incredible journey of giving, growing, and spreading kindness. Here's to many more years of changing lives, together.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

FANOGCS Steps Up for Heart Health at the Phoenix Heart Walk

BY: JANICE A. DESIONGCO



FANOGCS proudly participated in this year's Phoenix Heart Walk, a powerful event dedicated to raising awareness and funds for heart disease and stroke prevention. Our team came together to walk, inspire, and make a difference—demonstrating our commitment to heart health in our community.

This year, we raised \$411.16 to support the cause, helping fund life-saving research and initiatives through the American Heart Association. But the Heart Walk is more than just a fundraiser—it's a chance to honor survivors, remember loved ones, and encourage healthier lifestyles.

With every step, FANOGCS members, along with friends and family, showed their dedication to building a heart-healthier future. We are proud to stand with the American Heart Association in the fight against cardiovascular disease and to champion wellness in our community.

Here's to stronger hearts and a healthier tomorrow!

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!!

Role Description: assisting with blood sugar check, taking vital signs, and providing basic health education

JUNE 14, 2025, SATURDAY, ASU WEST CAMPUS, 4701 W. THUNDERBIRD RD., GLENDALE, AZ 85306 EITHER 8 AM-11:30 AM OR 11:30 AM-3 PM

TO SIGN UP:

FOR FANOGCS CONTACT: ALAIN - (480) 241-4458 OR ELDA - (480) 518-7099

FOR FANPAZ: ROSE C: (480) 206-0743 OR JANICE: (857) 241-7879



Health is Wealth: Don't Wait, Start Now!

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Lions Service Rally Kick-Off: A Community United in Service

BY: ELDA LIPPKE



The Lions Service Rally Kick-Off on Saturday, January 4th, was a powerful day of community service in the Greater Phoenix area. Lions clubs from across the Valley gathered to make a meaningful impact, demonstrating their dedication to serving others.

FANOGCS proudly participated in the event, offering vital sign assessments, blood sugar checks, and health education to attendees. The day began on an energetic note with a morning Zumba session led by Ajay Manabat, setting the tone for an uplifting and service-filled event.

It's truly inspiring to see an entire community come together, volunteering their time, talents, and skills to make a difference.

Thank you, Lions, for your unwavering commitment to service!

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

From Strangers to Family: A Story of Hope, Healing, and Human Kindness

BY: AMY LAXAMANA



In 2021, as Afghanistan descended into chaos, thousands of families were forced to make the heartbreaking decision to flee their homeland in search of safety. Among them was a young couple and their 8-year-old daughter, who boarded an overcrowded Airbus with nothing more than hope in their hearts and the clothes on their backs.

Shortly after arriving in the United States, the father became ill and was admitted to CRMC. It was there that Amy, a member of FANOGCS, crossed paths with the family. As she learned their story, it became clear they had no one — no friends, no relatives, and no support system in a new and unfamiliar land. The mother, still nursing their daughter, shared that they weren't allowed to bring any extra clothing due to the limited weight allowed on the evacuation flight.

(continued on page 5)

From strangers continued . . .

Amy's heart was moved. Without hesitation, she reached out to the FANOGCS community — and what happened next was nothing short of incredible. Clothing, toys, and even financial assistance began pouring in. What started as a call for help turned into a wave of compassion that wrapped the family in warmth and dignity.

By Christmas of 2022, the FANOGCS family had officially adopted the refugees as their foster family, offering not just material help, but love, friendship, and belonging. Through government assistance and continued support from FANOGCS, the family slowly found their footing. They eventually moved into a home of their own — a symbol of their new beginning.

But the bond didn't end there. FANOGCS, led by Amy, committed to visiting them twice a year, a small act that meant the world to a family rebuilding their lives from scratch. In December, during one of these visits, the joy was even greater as they celebrated the birthdays of not just one, but two daughters — the family had now grown to five.

This story is more than just a refugee's journey — it is a reminder that even the smallest act of kindness can create ripples of hope. It is a testament to the power of community, of stepping up when others are down, and of choosing compassion over comfort.

FANOGCS continues to shine as a light in the darkness, proving that when people come together with open hearts, lives can be changed — and sometimes, strangers can become family.



Batanes Provincial Health Office Expresses Gratitude to FANOGCS for Lifesaving Support

BY: GENEVIEVE CRABAJALES

The Batanes Provincial Health Office has extended heartfelt thanks to the Filipino-American Nurses Organization of Grand Canyon State (FANOGCS) through a formal announcement on their official website. This gesture of gratitude comes in recognition of FANOGCS's generous financial and logistical support that made a vital community outreach program possible.

On January 8 and January 14, 2025, FANOGCS partnered with the Batanes Provincial Health Office, under the leadership of Dr. Allan Sande, to bring much-needed healthcare services to the people of Batanes. The medical mission, conducted using their state-of-the-art medical bus, offered free medical consultations, treatments, dental care, and laboratory services to underserved communities.

In addition to healthcare services, the Health Office also provided free essential medicines and vitamins, focusing on the most vulnerable populations—children, pregnant women, and senior citizens. Their presence was not just a one-time event but a lasting commitment: free medical services will continue to be delivered every Wednesday across various small towns in Batanes, starting in the humble village of Imnajbu, Uyugan.

This partnership is a powerful example of how compassion, collaboration, and innovation can bring real change to communities in need. With continued efforts from organizations like FANOGCS, access to quality healthcare is no longer just a dream—it's becoming a reality for the people of Batanes.



QUARTER 2 ACTIVITIES



**Membership Drive
and
Team Building Picnic**

12th APR
SATURDAY
9:00AM-12:00PM

Discovery District Park (Bedrock)
in front of Volleyball court
2214 E Pecos Rd, Gilbert, AZ 85297

Theme: Kentucky Derby

RSVP to Rose Caumban (480) 206-0743

LIGHT LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED

WITH BEST IN KENTUCKY DERBY ATTIRE CONTEST



SPRING CONFERENCE HOLISTIC NURSING

**SATURDAY
APRIL 26, 2025**

7:30AM REGISTRATION
SESSIONS START AT
8AM AND ENDS AT 5PM

7 CONTACT HOURS
BREAKFAST AND
LUNCH PROVIDED

MCAULEY CONFERENCE ROOMS
3RD FLOOR OF
DIGNITY HEALTH MEDICAL GROUP
BUILDING
3420 S MERCY DRIVE, GILBERT AZ
85297

**DONATIONS TOWARDS
FUTURE EDUCATIONAL
EVENTS ARE WELCOME**



RSVP BY 4/15/2025
MELODY ORILLO 480-326-2569
MELITA DE ASIS 480-231-1985



PRESENTS

Hollywood Glamour

A RED CARPET EVENT

Marriott Phoenix Chandler
1600 S. Price Rd. Chandler AZ

**SATURDAY
JUNE 21, 2025
6PM-11PM**

Registration starts at 5pm

Tickets: Adults \$70
Kids (2-12 yrs old) \$35

Attire: Creative Formal

Zelle payments to:
info@fanogcs.org

RSVP: Amy (480) 323-9692 OR Faith (480) 321-5356
Rose: (480) 206-0743 or Nanette: (602) 410-4747

RAELES*D.I* LIVE MUSIC*DANCE

